

Topping the polls

Following are British and Scottish golf course architects and the ranking of their designs by *Golf Digest* in its latest list of America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses, released in 1997:

1. Pine Valley GC, Pine Valley, N.J. — George Crump (American) and H.S. Colt, Brit (1922)
2. Augusta National GC, Augusta, Ga. — Alister Mackenzie, Brit (1933)
3. Cypress Point, Pebble Beach, Calif. — Mackenzie (1928)
9. Pinehurst CC No. 2, Pinehurst, N.C. — Donald Ross, Scotsman (1935)
10. Oakland Hills CC South Course, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. — Ross (1918)
11. The Olympic Club (Lake), San Francisco — Willie Watson, Scotsman (1924)
12. Seminole GC, North Palm Beach, Fla. — Ross (1929)
13. The Country Club (Clyde/Squirrel), Brookline, Mass. — Willie Campbell, Scotsman (1895)
16. Medinah CC No. 3 — Tom Bendelow, Scotsman (1928)
18. Crystal Downs CC, Frankfort, Mich. — Mackenzie (1931)
22. Oak Hill CC East Course, Rochester, N.Y. — Ross (1925)
32. Scioto CC, Columbus, Ohio — Ross (1921)
33. Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio — Ross (1919)
34. Maidstone Club, East Hampton, N.Y. — W.H. Tucker, Brit (1899)
39. Plainfield CC, Plainfield, N.J. — Ross (1921)
46. Interlachen CC, Edina, Minn. — Watson (1911)
52. Wannamoisett CC, Rumford, R.I. — Ross (1916)
62. Olympia Fields CC North Course, Olympia Fields, Ill. — Willie Park Jr., Scotsman (1922)
63. Canterbury GC, Shaker Heights, Ohio — Herbert Strong, Brit (1922)
73. Milwaukee CC, Milwaukee, Wis. — Colt and Alison (1929)
79. Salem CC, Peabody, Mass. — Ross (1926)
83. Pasatiempo GC, Santa Cruz, Calif. — Mackenzie (1929)
85. The Valley Club of Montecito, Santa Barbara, Calif. — Mackenzie and American Robert Hunter (1929)
88. Aronimink GC, Newtown Square, Pa. — Ross (1928)
94. East Lake GC, Atlanta — Ross (1915)



'I think you have to live over here. I don't think you can play ball from the other side of the Atlantic. It would be very difficult to be "in the know."

— Clive Clark



'If you're a good conductor of the orchestra, it doesn't matter your nationality — you can still play Carnegie Hall.'

— Donald Steel



'Wherever we lead, the others eventually follow ... Martin [Hawtree] would love to go back [to America].'

— Fred Hawtree

The Redcoats are coming!

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Paul Revere, the Redcoats are, indeed, returning.

Traditional golf course design was forged in America by a small group still considered the "classical architects": Brits Alister Mackenzie, H.S. Colt, Herbert Fowler and Tom Simpson, and Scotsmen Donald Ross, Willie Park Jr. and Willie Watson. (Eight of today's top 15-ranked courses in the country were designed through the 1920s by their hands and those of their countrymen.)

Then, Americans turned the tables. Men like Robert Trent Jones Sr. — and more recently Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and others — took up the call and spread the design of golf courses around the globe. A few, like Nicklaus, Arthur Hills, Bob Cupp and Robert Trent Jones Jr., even had the balderdash to design layouts in the United Kingdom.

But the pendulum may be swinging back yet again — this time, initially, in the persons of British designers Clive Clark, Donald Steel and, as a vanguard 25 years ago, Fred and Martin Hawtree.

"Perhaps this is a new trend," acknowledged Clark, a former British Tour and Ryder Cup golfer and television color analyst who has designed 20 courses in Europe but, until this summer, had none in the United States. "There has been a long gap between British designers coming to America. So, yes, I suppose these things, like the Ryder Cup, go in movements,

don't they? For a long time we didn't win the Ryder Cup, then it turned around and the Brits started doing OK." [with the aid of Messrs. Ballesteros and Langer et al...]

Tom McKenzie, a lead architect for Donald Steel & Co. of West Sussex, England, put it this way: "There is certainly a move in American golf back toward traditional methods. Whether that will be done through American or European architects is hard to tell. But, that style is one the Brits have advocated for centuries, so we have a head start."

Steel himself said: "If you're a good conductor of the orchestra, it doesn't matter your nationality you can still play Carnegie Hall. For us, this is a new challenge and an opportunity for people to see our work. Hopefully, they will judge it favorably. If they do, one might see a change of style or approach [in America]."

While Clark was "first in" in this latest incursion into the United States, with his Belgrade Lakes (Maine) Golf Club opening its front nine in July and back nine in September, the initial push was made by Fred Hawtree in 1973 at Mount Mitchell in North Carolina.

"The developer, Vern Floyd, went to St. Andrews and met John Campbell, the superintendent," said the 82-year-old Hawtree from his Oxfordshire office. "John was a friend of mine and introduced us. It was thought that a 'little

touch of British' might give it [the new course] an edge. In theory the aim was to get away from the American style."

The exclusive Carnegie Club, which hired Steel to add a nine-hole track to his Carnegie Links at Skibo Castle in Dornoch, Scotland, has hired him to design an 18-hole course as the cornerstone for Cherokee Plantation. Ground was broken in late August on this 4,000-acre development along the Combahee River between Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. "Our client is British, which makes a difference," said McKenzie.

"The whole concept with Cherokee Plantation is for visitors to enjoy the experience, which is like Skibo's Edwardian-type life."

Jim Tullis, the developer at the Spirit Ridge Golf Course at Blount Springs, Ala., imported Steel to design a traditional-style golf course reminiscent of those early British-designed projects in the United States.

Tullis's wife Linda explained: "The historical tie with the United Kingdom is hard to ignore, Birmingham, Ala., being named after Birmingham in England. We had seen examples of Steel's work elsewhere in the world and were keen to have him design his first course in the United States."

It is ironic that when Blount Springs first came to prominence as a health resort, golf was heading west over the Atlantic from the UK, and now during its second birth its owners have gone back to the homeland of golf for an architect.

"The course is designed to fit in with the 'New Old Town' and be distinctly different from the new golf courses in the area," McKenzie said.

Old World-New World. Classic Style-Modern Style. The clash, and the comparisons are continual fodder among golf course architects from the two continents.

"My complaint," said Steel, "is that too many architects today, even if they got into the Garden of Eden, would not be satisfied. They'd turn it upside down and put it back together again. That may be fine in certain parts of the world, but I think the golfing world will get fed up sooner or later.

"One objection of mine," he added, "is that [the modern] style of design forces the golfer to play only one style of shot — all big powerful through the air. The old choice of shots that you could play is disappearing fast."

Having grown up in the UK where golf originated, Steel, Hawtree and Clark have those classic courses in their blood. That influence is obvious in their design philosophies.

"The pre-war architects had to use their wits much more and keep the thing simple," Steel said. "I'm not sure modern architects haven't complicated things unnecessarily. Simple is best, certainly cheapest.

"I don't think golf courses are different

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